

may have heard Carver's name associated with peanuts (boy, did he love them). Contrary to popular belief, Carver did not invent peanut butter. But he did develop more than 300 other food, industrial and commercial items with peanuts, such as plastics, dyes, soap, milk and cosmetics. He also invented 118 products from sweet potatoes, including molasses and postage-stamp glue.

After Carver died, in 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a national monument built for him, an honor that before then had been reserved only for presidents.

Zephyr Wright

- Personal chef for President Lyndon B. Johnson
- Told her firsthand stories about discrimination to Johnson, which is thought to have influenced his signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Zephyr Wright drew in crowds with her comfort food. But the one person who may have benefited the most was Lyndon B. Johnson.

Wright was born and raised in Marshall, Tex. In 1942, she started working for the Johnsons as a maid and cook to help pay her way through college; she ended up staying with the family until 1969, through the duration of Johnson's presidency. While Johnson was in Congress, his home quickly became known for its food, as other politicians visited regularly and built relationships over Wright's chile con queso and peach cobbler. Lady Bird Johnson once wrote, "I have yet to find a great chef whose desserts I like as well as Zephyr's."

Wright was known to have told Johnson of her experiences with discrimination. Leonard H. Marks, the director of the United States Information Agency at the time of Johnson's presidency, was one witness to this. "When Sammy and I drive to Texas and I have to go to the bathroom, like Lady Bird or the girls, I am not allowed to go to the bathroom," Mr. Marks recounted Wright telling Johnson. (Her husband, Sammy, was Johnson's driver.) "I have to find a bush and squat. When it comes time to eat, we can't go into restaurants. We have to eat out of a brown bag."

When Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Wright was there. After he finished, he gave her a pen he used and said, "You deserve this more than anybody else."

Wright died in 1988 from heart complications at age 73.

Abby Fisher

- One of the first black cookbook authors
- Her cookbook was originally published in 1881 and reprinted in 1995

An illustration of Zephyr Wright, a Black woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing a white collared shirt. She is smiling and looking towards the viewer. In the background is a stylized illustration of the White House with an American flag flying on a tall pole in front of it. To the left of the White House, there are some stylized trees. The entire illustration is in a simple, graphic style with bold outlines and flat colors.

100
GREATEST
HOME COOKS
OF ALL TIME

100 GREATEST HOME COOKS

Zephyr Wright Fed a President, Changed the Nation

BY ADRIAN MILLER / 06.14.17

All hail the 100 Greatest Home Cooks of All Time, Epicurious' pantheon of inventors, improvisers, entertainers, and home economists who changed the way we all eat today. Hungry for more of their stories? Dive in right here.

Zephyr Wright was great home cook, and a cook in a great home: the White House.

Born and raised in Marshall, Texas, the college-educated Wright once thought her future would be limited to doing a lifetime of domestic service in her hometown. That changed when Claudia "Ladybird" Johnson came around in the early 1940s looking for a cook. Some friends recommended Wright, and her successful interview began a thirty-plus year career of making superlative meals for an enduring power couple.

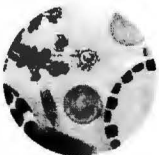
Wright's traditional Southern cooking was an immediate asset for Ladybird and her husband, Congressman Lyndon Baines Johnson. Wright kept the Johnsons well-fed on specialties like fried chicken, hash, peach cobbler, and popovers, and helped them quickly make their home a hot ticket on Washington, D.C.'s dinner party scene. Few passed up an opportunity to sup at the Johnsons' table, and such meals were the perfect platform to build relationships with key staffers in the White House, fellow members of Congress, reporters, and other movers and shakers in Washington, D.C.

Once LBJ became president, he and Ladybird retained White House Executive Chef René Verdon, a French national, who was hired during the Kennedy Administration. But a clear division of labor developed: Verdon prepared all of the VIP meals in the White House's basement kitchen while Wright did all of the home cooking in a private kitchen on the White House's second floor. Chef Verdon's very French cooking didn't mesh well with the Johnsons' Texas palate, and he soon resigned. Wright cooked all of the White House meals until Verdon's replacement, Henry Haller, was hired.

Wright's influence extended beyond the White House kitchen. Back when LBJ was in Congress, the Johnsons would drive back-and-forth from Washington, D.C. to central Texas during legislative recesses. Wright suffered so many indignities on those trips due to segregation customs and laws that she ultimately refused to travel by car and stayed in D.C. year-round. While LBJ built support in Congress for the 1964 Civil Rights Act, he used Wright's Jim Crow experiences to shame reluctant legislators into supporting the landmark legislation. After signing the landmark legislation, LBJ gave Wright one of the signing pens. "You deserve this more than anyone else," he said.

Adrian Miller is author of The President's Kitchen Cabinet: The Story of the African Americans Who Have Fed Our First Families, From the Washingtons to the Obamas.

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LBJ BEANS



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"Famous Women in the Kitchen"

November 14, 1967

Recipes
npn

Dear Mrs. Longo:

Mrs. Johnson was most appreciative of your letter, and your interest, and has asked me to answer your questions in her behalf.

While the First Lady did the cooking in the early years of her marriage, and could certainly put together a tasty meal if called upon, she has relinquished these duties to very able domestic help for many years. At the White House, the Johnson's longtime cook, Zephyr Wright does the honors in the family kitchen, and at the ranch, Mary Davis, another longtime Johnson employee serves in this capacity. Both ladies have been with the family so long that they are almost members of the family.

Cooks
npn

In case you would be interested, I am enclosing here two of Mrs. Johnson's favorite recipes.

With all good wishes to you,

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carpenter
Press Secretary and Staff
Director to Mrs. Johnson

Zephyr Wright
npn

Mary Davis

Mrs. James A. Longo
The Patterson News
Patterson, New Jersey

(Rosalie Longo)

MM:oo'g

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MRS. CARPENTER'S FILE

WH5F, Liz Carpenter, Alpha

Box 128

"WRIGHT, MRS. ZEPHYR B, L-R"

Lady Bird family chef carries forward culinary memories



Anneville, Texas

SEPTEMBER 12, 1999

DEAR SUE,

HOSPITALITY TOOK ON AN ADDED GLOW AS THE CROWDS CONVERGED ON THE RANCH FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF LYNDON'S BIRTHDAY. WITH YOU AT THE HELM IN THE KITCHEN AND SEEMINGLY EVERYWHERE, MY GUESTS FELT VERY WARMLY WELCOMED.

IT ALL SEEMED TO PROGRESS SO SMOOTHLY, BUT I AM AWARE OF HOW MUCH EFFORT IT TOOK, AS THE CAST CHANGED CHARACTERS SO MANY TIMES AND THERE WERE SO MANY HELDS MET. I THOUGHT IT CAME OFF WITH PROFESSIONAL EFFICIENCY AND APLOMB.

NOW IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE. I HOPE YOU AND YOUR FAVORITE DATE WILL GO OUT TO DINNER AND ENJOY, ENJOY!

Just fully Lady Bird Johnson

MRS. SUE BELLOW
101 E. SHUBERT
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS 77644

BY JEN BIUNDO

jen@haysfreepress.com

4/16/08

One Monday afternoon almost two decades ago, chef Sue Bellows' phone rang.

As she recounts the voice on the other end of the line, Bellows inflects her words with a charming southern drawl: "Sue, this is Lady Bird, and I was wondering if you'd like to come work for me."

The caller was Lady Bird Johnson, the widow of former president Lyndon Baines Johnson, and it was the offer of a lifetime.

At Bellows' current restaurant job the hours were long and arduous, cutting into her family life, and the tyrannical head chef actually threw pots across the kitchen in anger. But she was under contract and couldn't simply quit, Bellows regretfully told Mrs. Johnson.

The former first lady thought for a moment and then asked what days Bellows had off - Monday and Tuesday, Bellows replied.

"Mrs. Johnson said, 'Fine, I'll just have my dinner parties on Monday and Tuesday,'" Bellows recounted. And so it was settled.

Last week, sitting in her Buda home, Bellows reflected

The woman known to the nation as Lady Bird Johnson was born Claudia Alta Taylor in 1912 in the small town of Karnack on the Texas-Louisiana border. In 1934, Lady Bird Taylor married Lyndon Baines Johnson, a young congressional aide with political aspirations of his own. Lyndon ran for a seat in the U.S. Congress three years later, and from there launched a Senate career.

In 1951, the Johnsons acquired the ranch near Johnson City that had belonged to Lyndon's aunt and uncle, and began an extensive renovation and restoration project. Almost immediately, the 245-acre LBJ Ranch became an important social and political hub.

John F. Kennedy selected Johnson as his running mate in the 1960 presidential election. Following Kennedy's assassination, Johnson was sworn in as President of the United States on Nov. 22, 1963 and served until January of 1969.

The Johnsons retired to the ranch, where the former president died of a heart attack in 1973.

Lady Bird Johnson remained in the public eye after her husband's death, serving on



PHOTO BY JEN BIUNDO



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HOW IT'S...
FAVORITE DATE WILL GO OUT TO...
Joseph Lady Bird Johnson

MRS. SUE BELLOW
907 E. BRUBAKER
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS 77844

BY JEN BIUNDO

jen@haysfreepress.com

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Last week, sitting in her Buda home, Bellows reflected on her 17 years as the personal chef to the Johnson family.

"She loved good food and I think that's how we really bonded, because I love to make good food," Bellows said.

Among those who knew her firsthand, there's a certain vocabulary people reach for when describing Lady Bird Johnson—words like gracious, charming, genuine and vibrant.

"She was a wonderful lady," Bellows said, putting just the slightest emphasis on "lady."

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Lady Bird Johnson remained in the public eye after her husband's death, serving on the board of regents for the University of Texas System and founding the National Wildflower Research Center, later renamed in her honor.

"She woke up on her 70th birthday and said, 'If I'm ever going to do anything about this wildflower business I'd better get started,'" Bellows recalled. "She didn't just sit by and bat her eyelashes. She took action. All of her grandkids are active

See FEEDING LADY BIRD, pg. 3B



COURTESY PHOTOS

From top to bottom: Bellows, left, presents a cake to Luci Johnson, center left, as Lady Bird Johnson watches the festivities. Bellows with her employer and friend of 17 years, Lady Bird Johnson. Bellows lights candles in Lady Bird Johnson's Westlake home. In addition to her chef duties, Bellows artfully arranged flowers for the Johnson family's table.



Feeding Lady Bird: Buda woman recalls culinary memories

Continued from pg. 1B

in all kinds of good things, too. I think the seed of public service has really been ingrained. She was an incredible example."

Bellows and Lady Bird Johnson attended the same Episcopal Church, and when Bellows accepted her job offer in the late 1980s, the former first lady was as active as ever.

Lady Bird Johnson would host dinner parties at her Westlake home in Austin on Wednesday and Thursday, often for the old guard of Washington insiders. Then she would spend the weekend at the LBJ ranch, always accompanied by members of the extended family and often joined by more guests.

"She was the most consummate hostess," Bellows said. "People were always very glad to be part of her table. Mrs. Johnson knew how to bring people together over a good meal for really serious and educating conversations. She was incredible that way. But the important thing to Mrs. Johnson was that her guests were always well taken care of."

The Johnson family was known for being wonderful entertainers, and every year on Aug. 27 they would throw the most impressive fête of all in honor of the former president's birthday, complete with a mouthwatering menu.

About 40 specially invited guests would congregate on the ranch for private formal dinner party, Bellows said. As the festivities began, three bartenders would oversee cocktail hour.

"The older people were heavier cocktail drinkers – you would have martinis, bourbon, scotch and vodkas," Bellows said. "Now, the younger people don't do that as often, so you would have red wine, white wine, sangria and beer."

For hors d'oeuvres, Bellows would set up a large crudité plate, stilton cheese and puff pastry, and shrimp with a remoulade sauce. After about 45 minutes or an hour of socializing, the guests would head to the dining room, where the table was made up with the formal dinner setting.

There, the first course would

Vineyard, where she would serve up feasts of lobster with clarified butter, corn on the cob and fresh organic tomatoes with basil.

Lady Bird Johnson enjoyed simple dishes made from fresh ingredients, such as pecan-crusted tilapia and creamed spinach, as well as more distinguished fare like Veal Milanese.

"Mrs. Johnson's favorite food was a tenderloin, medium rare, and she also loved catfish and fish, period," Bellows said. "And she loved desserts."

Lady Bird Johnson was a food lover, Bellows recalled, but a careful eater, slowly enjoying small portions of good food.

After years cooking in restaurants, the transition to being a personal family chef was an interesting one for Bellows.

"First of all, you learn to know your diners and you can pretty much cater directly to them," Bellows said. "You really learn the likes and dislikes of each individual. The Johnson family, hands down, likes their meat medium rare."

In addition to her employer, Bellows learned to cook for the entire clan. The Johnsons had two children, seven adult grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren born between 1995 and 2006.

"One of Luci Johnson's daughters is pretty much vegan, another does not eat fish, and another one likes pretty much everything her grandmother likes, the way her grandmother likes it," Bellows said. "And then you have 10 great-grandchildren there – you make a lot of macaroni and cheese and a lot of chicken tenders."

Bellows recalls boisterous gatherings of the extended family, and quiet mornings when the grandchildren would ride bikes around the ranch, and she would read Lady Bird the Sunday paper.

"I really never thought that she would die," Bellows said.

Johnson had a stroke in 1992 that left her legally blind, and a more severe stroke in 2002 that impacted her ability to speak. Still, her twilight years were marked by a con-

"Mrs. Johnson was lucid until the very end and surrounded by loves ones," Bellows said. "I think she was ready. She had lived such an incredible life."

Bellows retired to a historic home in old town Buda with her husband, an artist and metal worker. Lady Bird John-

son's portrait hangs in a place of honor in their dining room.

"For Sue," the inscription reads, "Whose talented hands and creativity make each meal a joy and whose warmth and willing flexibility is appreciated by me and all my family. With deepest gratitude, Lady Bird Johnson."

CHICKEN SALAD

For elegant yet simple luncheons, Lady Bird Johnson loved this chicken salad recipe. The sweetness of the pineapple and mango chutney pairs well with the salty capers and spicy cayenne.

Use 5 cups of white meat (chicken breast), cut with scissors into cubes. Cover chicken with some of the chicken broth from ribs that cooked while the chicken was roasting.

The Chicken:

- 5 cups chicken, cut into medium pieces
- 5 stalks celery, deveined and cut into pieces
- 1 cup almond slivers (toasted). Careful, they will burn fast... on a tray in a toaster oven works well, but watch them. You want the almonds golden not dark brown to black)
- 1 five-ounce can water chestnuts (whole) cut into cubes
- Mix all ingredients in large bowl.

Dressing:

- 2 good dashes cayenne
- 1-teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2-cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Grey Pompon mustard

The last ingredients to add:

- 1 1/2 cup white seedless grapes
- 1-cup pineapple chunks (drained)
- 3 tablespoons mango chutney
- 1 five-ounce can pitted black olives (drained)
- 3 teaspoons capers

Serve on a lettuce leaf with chutney and French bread toast slices. Deviled eggs are also a good companion for this lunch.

ZUCCHINI TIMBALES

"There's always one thing Texas gardeners have too many of, and that's zucchini," Bellows said. In keeping with her philosophy of using fresh, local and organic ingredients, Bellows developed a way to turn the humble vegetable into a visually impressive side dish.

- 10 small zucchini, 5 to 6 inches long and about 1 inch in diameter
- 1/4-cup fresh basil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1/4-cup fresh or dried bread crumbs
- 1/2-teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a large baking dish with butter or cooking spray. Slice the zucchini in half lengthwise and place them in a steamer basket in a large saucepan filled with 2 inches of simmering water. Cover and steam the zucchini until softened but not mushy 2 to 4 minutes, or a little longer if you've used thicker

hour.
 "The older people were heavier cocktail drinkers – you would have martinis, bourbon, scotch and vodkas," Bellows said. "Now, the younger people don't do that as often, so you would have red wine, white wine, sangria and beer."

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There, the first course would be waiting for them, often a salad of field greens topped with a warm pecan-coated chèvre cheese. Alternately, the guests might find a bowl of avocado soup or gazpacho.

At the birthday dinners, the entrée was always the same: medium rare beef tenderloin with a creamy horseradish sauce — homemade, not bought.

For side dishes, Bellows would look to the vegetables that spill out of Texas gardens at the height of summer and cook up molten corn pudding, zucchini soufflé timbales and sliced tomatoes dressed in nothing more than olive oil, salt and pepper and fresh basil.

Guests would close out the meal with a delicate thin-crust peach cobbler served with scoops of Bluebell vanilla ice cream.

The guests would spend the night at the ranch, and in the morning Johnson would serve breakfast for them while simultaneously coordinating an outdoor coffee reception for another 75 people outside.

When not coordinating and cooking for large-scale parties, Bellows would cook up everyday fare for the Johnson family.

In the summers, Bellows would follow the Johnson family to the retreat at Martha's

lows said. "And then you have 10 great-grandchildren there – you make a lot of macaroni and cheese and a lot of chicken tenders."

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"I really never thought that she would die," Bellows said.

Johnson had a stroke in 1992 that left her legally blind, and a more severe stroke in 2002 that impacted her ability to speak. Still, her twilight years were marked by a continued zest for life, despite her failing health, Bellows recalled.

"The joy she had in the last years with the great-grandkids was amazing," Bellows said.

Even in the final months, when she couldn't eat solid foods, the former first lady still liked to come and sit at the dinner table and be part of the communal ritual.

Lady Bird Johnson died on July 11, 2007 and was buried in the Johnson family cemetery in Stonewall, Texas.

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Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a large baking dish with butter or cooking spray. Slice the zucchini in half lengthwise and place them in a steamer basket in a large saucepan filled with 2 inches of simmering water. Cover and steam the zucchini until softened but not mushy, 3 to 4 minutes, or a little longer if you've used thicker zucchini. Place the steamed zucchini, cut side down, on a double layer of paper towels to drain until cool to the touch. Using a melon baller or teaspoon, scoop out and reserve the centers, leaving the outer skin and about 1/4 inch of the inner flesh. (You will have about 2 cups reserved flesh.) Set aside the zucchini shells.

Combine the reserved zucchini flesh, basil, garlic, Parmesan, egg, breadcrumbs, and salt in a blender or food processor. Pulse until just mixed, not pureed. Arrange the zucchini shells, skin side down, in the prepared baking dish. Using a spoon or a pastry bag, fill each shell with filling mixture. The filling should be rounded on top but not brimming out of the shells. Bake for about 25 minutes, until golden brown on top. Serve immediately. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

SOUFFLÉ GRAND MARNIER

To satisfy *Lady Bird* Johnson's sweet tooth, Bellows would make Soufflé Grand Marnier to close out a formal dinner.

Beat in double boiler over hot water: 8 egg yolks; 2/3 cups sugar. Continue to beat until the mixture forms a broad ribbon as it runs from a lifted spoon.

Add 1/2 cup Grand Marnier liqueur.

To arrest the cooking, transfer the mixture to a bowl and beat it over ice until cooled.

Beat 10 egg whites until foamy. Add 1/4-teaspoon cream of tartar. Continue to beat until stiff, but not dry.

Fold the egg yolk mixture into egg whites.

Bake 12 to 15 minutes in 400-degree oven.

Sauce:

- 2 cup orange juice
- 1-1/2 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup Grand Marnier

Warm until thickened. Serve warm.

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MO



~ COMING SOON TO KYLE ~

Harrell

FUNERAL HOME

The letter that officially designated Kennedy as an ensign in the Navy is on display, as well as Kennedy's dress uniform and mementos from his duty in the South Pacific.

Rigg said museum visitors get significant insight into how Kennedy felt about his tour of duty in the South Pacific in a letter he wrote to his parents.

"I've finally seen what I came 10,000 miles to see, and the question is whether it was worth coming 10,000 miles to see, the answer with a quick look up in the air is yes. But I must admit that a 10,000 mile trip in the other direction to see peace would be a heck of a lot more worthwhile," Kennedy wrote home.

Another poignant handwritten note contains details by Kennedy later used in a magazine article describing the man responsible for the rescue of Kennedy and his boat crew.

"We came from the powerful United States, he from a jungle home in the islands," Kennedy wrote.

The exhibit officially opens on Saturday, May 21 Armed Services Day.

The food of presidents
By Margaret Goerig
Lynchburg News & Advance
May 18, 2005

To borrow the words of Virginia Woolf, unless one has dined well, one cannot think well, love well or sleep well.

Add to that: nor can one run a country well.

From Bill Clinton's fast food binges to George H. W. Bush's ban on broccoli to Jimmy Carter's palate for peanuts, the importance of what comes out of the First Kitchen dates back to the beginning.

When the chef of 32nd President Franklin D. Roosevelt served her boss one too many a bland meal, the commander in chief apparently said, "My stomach positively rebels and this does not help my relations with foreign powers. I bit two of them yesterday!"

Whether or not FDR made his point clear to his cook, the anecdote did not escape the attention of author **John R. Hanny**, who includes the above story and much more in his part-history book, part-cookbook "Secrets from the White House Kitchens." On Saturday, Hanny will be at Givens Books on Lakeside Drive, signing the book and offering samples of desserts and hors d'oeuvres featured in the collection of roughly 270 recipes.

From FDR to George W. Bush, Hanny leads readers through the bowels of presidential administrations, detailing everything from the elaborate six-course meals for which Dwight D. Eisenhower became known at all state dinners, to excerpts from the speech JFK planned to give the day of his assassination.

And while the kitchen of the younger Bush, or No. 43, has a decidedly Texan flair, dishing out baked potato soup, guacamole and cowboy cookies, the Kennedys fancied French-sounding foods, such as frog legs provencale, veal chasseur and filet de boeuf with sauteed vegetables.

This book is not a new concept. The White House Historical Association Web page lists 13 other such cookbooks, dating from 1927 to 1987.

Yet it's a more personal account for Hanny; most of the anecdotes come from his five-and-a-half-year stint in the White House that started at age 23 as a food and wine consultant, prepping state luncheons and dinners for visiting heads of state, and advising John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson on food matters.

The rest of the information he gleaned from the First Families, Presidential libraries and U.S. embassies,

as well as interviews he conducted with Harry Truman, "a spicy kind of guy," through Clinton, who "just loves junk food like the rest of us."

Now in his 60s, Hanny lives on a farm in Gordonsville with his horses and Cocker Spaniels. (And, in keeping with his Buffalo, N.Y.-based family's 197-year tradition that every male own a restaurant, Hanny and his younger brother, Bud, own the Eagle House in Williamsville, N.Y.)

Hanny, who holds a culinary arts master's degree and who trained under a French chef and earned the title chevalier (the French equivalent of an English knight), became a book author almost by accident.

Thirty-five years in the making, Hanny says the book began as a journal he kept each night after work at the White House. Years later, when Hanny was going through his divorce and cleaning out the attic, he came across the "squirrel-eaten" box of notes and recipes, which he was inspired to turn into a book.

In the end, the publication won a National Press Club Book Selection award and Hanny found himself in the heady company of his fellow class winners.

"There was Walter Cronkite, Letitia Baldrige, Wesley Clark, John Eisenhower (son of Ike) and Dr. Ruth - and me," Hanny says. "... So it really catapulted me in a whole new career."

After the success of "Secrets," he wrote a thriller novel, "Asleep at the Wheel," inspired by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks; he is now working on the sequel, "Take-Down."

He has plans for two more White House cookbooks, he says, and is working on the second, "Founders Fare," to detail the early Presidential administrations. The third has no name yet, but he says it will cover the administrations from James Buchanan to Herbert Hoover.

In the meantime, he says "Secrets" has been selling well.

Later this year, he says a different publisher will release an updated version that includes photos, an omission in the first edition.

And with a new publicist, Hanny says he hopes to continue with the spate of more than 100 signings he did three years ago, when the book first came out.

His goal, he says, is to go to the smaller bookstore venues rather than "the Borders and all the big bookstores." While it's nice to go in there and see his book, he says, "people are going back to the mom and pop shops and I want to be a part of it."

If you're going

WHAT: John R. Hanny book signing, featuring food from 'Secrets from the White House Kitchens'

WHEN: 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday

WHERE: Givens Books, 2236 Lakeside Drive, Lynchburg

TICKETS: Free and open to the public

INFO: (434) 385-5027

White House seeks a chef

Here's one "wanted" ad you might not see every day: the White House is shopping for a chef.

Having fired Walter Scheib III in February, after his 11 years of service, the First Family is out an executive chef.

Patient Mary Williams and Family Remember LBJ

By Terri Dusek of Hospice Austin, courtesy of Darlene Pérez

Like most people who remember the day President John F. Kennedy was shot, Hospice Austin patient Mary Davis Williams recalls precisely what she was doing when she heard the news.

"I was taking three pies out of the oven when I heard. I just couldn't believe it," she said.

What's important about those pies is that they were actually for the President. Williams at that time cooked for Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and his family at their Stonewall, Texas ranch. The Vice President, Lady Bird, the President and First Lady were scheduled to arrive at the ranch later that day. Williams and the ranch staff were preparing for their arrival until the fateful event in Dallas changed everything.

Williams and her daughter La Faye York have many memories of those years when their entire family lived on the ranch. Williams tells of the time when LBJ was in an Austin hospital and wanted nothing to eat except Williams' chicken soup. A helicopter was sent to the ranch to pick up a batch.

As the oldest of five children growing up in Lee County, Williams learned to cook from her mother. She was the pastry cook at Harris Elementary in Austin when she took the position at the ranch where her husband worked.

"Moving out to the ranch was just like moving in with your own family. They were such down-to-earth people," Williams said.

She says LBJ and his family enjoyed "just good country food."

York remembers that LBJ favorites were fried catfish, black-eyed peas, sliced tomatoes, coleslaw and homemade peach ice cream. Williams said her kitchen was a favorite hang-out for the Secret

Service agents who would get samples of her creations.

Williams and York said their family was treated as part of the Johnson family. The family was included in holiday celebrations, surprised with gifts—even swimming lessons for La Faye. During this time, the Civil Rights movement was at its height and the Williams family worked and grew up around the man who championed the cause during his presidency, promoting African-Americans to key government positions and ordering his administration to stay away from segregated meetings.

"He was very generous and he was always doing something special. When the Kennedy half dollars first came out, he came out to the ranch

one day with Governor Connally. He gave my brothers and me some of the very first Kennedy half dollars," La Faye said.

York worked at the White House the summer after her high school graduation and the LBJ family covered her college costs.

"We didn't want for anything," Williams said.

Williams misses the President dearly and still becomes emotional when she talks about what he means to her.

Looking over her vast collection of memorabilia, letters and photos from that time, she holds a small bust of LBJ. Gazing at it she said, "When he died, it was like my dad had passed on. He's my heart."



Mary Davis Williams shows President Lyndon Johnson a Christmas turkey as Lady Bird and other relatives look on. Williams and her family lived at the LBJ Ranch in Stonewall, Texas, in the 1960s during the time Williams cooked at the ranch.

Among FRIENDS *of LBJ*

Issue Number LXV, June, 2001



“Bully!”

**Lawrence Luckinbill Brings
Teddy Roosevelt
to the LBJ Library**

Story, page two

CHEFS AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Rene Verdon - head chef

Henri Haller "

Heinz Bender - pastry chef



A new chef for the White House range

To prepare those big state dinners, the White House hired a new chef. Henry Haller is a specialist in French cuisine and such scenic cookery as the sample shown here. Looking like a cross between a Swedish smorgasbord and a Swiss cuckoo clock, the platter contains a leg of venison. The deer that festoon the dish look enough like those on the President's spread to whet the appetite of any Texan.



LIFE, 2/4/66

Former LBJ cook whips up a meal you can bank on

By MAGGIE KENNEDY

Staff Writer

RIO VISTA — Jessie Fantroy celebrated her 53rd birthday not long ago. Her four children and 10 grandchildren as well as her many friends and co-workers in this rural community near Cleburne honored her with cakes, gifts, hugs, kisses and, of course, birthday cards.

But one perennial birthday card that Jessie treasured for so many years didn't find its way into her mailbox this time.

"I don't get one from Mrs. Johnson anymore," Jessie remarked with gracious understanding. "I guess she's cutting down on expenses or she's got a new secretary."

Lady Bird Johnson may have forgotten Jessie Fantroy, but Jessie will never forget the Lyndon B. Johnson family, or the 15 years she worked as a parttime cook at the LBJ Ranch and the Johnson lake house at Granite Shoals. Jessie cooked for the Johnsons off and on between 1954 and 1969.

"I followed him all the way," laughed Jessie, "from senator to vice-president and president." She was also among the mourners who stood in the cold rain during his funeral in 1973.

For the past 10 years Jessie Fantroy has been the cook extraordinaire for employees at First State Bank in this tiny hamlet whose population, bank officials brag, is "crowding 400." Before, during and after the ranch, Jessie worked as a maid and cook for a Cleburne bank president, the Robert Clinton McShan family in Dallas and Henry Ashby when he was Garland's chief of police.

Jessie, or Mother as the 90 bank employees call her affectionately, is a living testimony to what her home-style cooking does to people. At 5-foot-3, she's almost as wide as she is short. "You can see from my figure I love

anything I fix," she chuckled.

What Jessie fixes best is meatloaf, chicken 'n' dumplings, barbecue, pork 'n' rice, chicken-fried steak, enchiladas, roast beef, fresh vegetables, fruit cobblers, pinto beans and black-eyed peas, chili, crusty cornbread, fluffy rolls, okra gumbo, stuffed bell peppers. Nothing fancy, just good old-fashioned food.

"That's what President Johnson liked best," she said as she casually dropped thick strips of dough into a large stainless steel pot filled with bubbling chicken stock and chunky chicken pieces.

"He didn't like fancy food much," she added, "and he didn't like it over seasoned. But he dearly loved my chili. And fried fish and hush puppies and good steaks. He didn't like real sweet desserts though. His favorites were plain cakes without icing and fresh fruit cobblers. Oh, how he loved my peach cobbler. I always put a little lemon in it. And his fig newtons with cold, fresh milk. I used to set the glass and the milk in the freezer for a while to get it cold enough for him."

While Jessie has long been famous for her barbecue, she said LBJ preferred his own. "He even made his own barbecue sauce," she commented. "It was his secret recipe."

Jessie remembers that around the house Lyndon Johnson relaxed in khaki trousers, a short-sleeved shirt and socks. But no shoes. "He didn't snack much but every now and then he'd come through the kitchen and pat me on the shoulder while he'd get a spoon to sample what I was cooking."

From 1957 to '59, Jessie, husband Love and their four children lived in their mobile home parked at the ranch. She turned down an offer from the Johnsons to work for them in Washington. "That was just too far from home," she smiled.

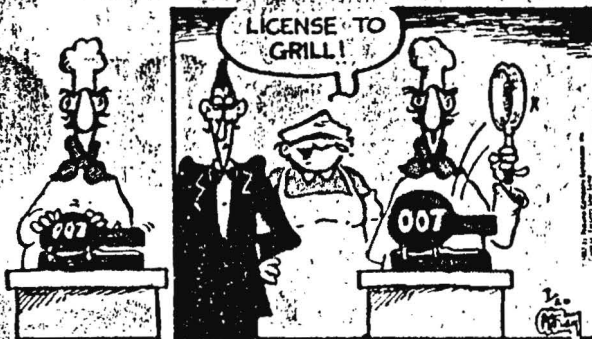
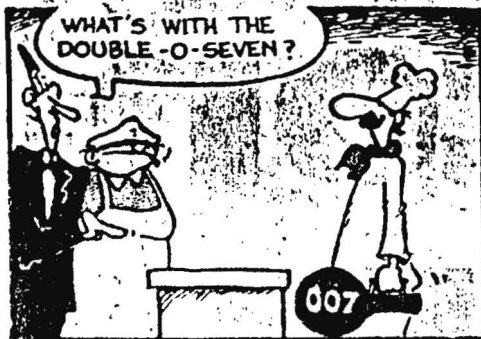
Menu planning was among Jessie's duties at the

See JESSIE on Page 15



— Staff photo by Andy Hanson

Jessie Fantroy: once a cook for the Johnsons, now a cook for bank employees



Mrs. Johnson usually left menu up to Jessie

JESSIE — From Page One

ranch. "Mrs. Johnson made suggestions but mostly it was left up to me," she explained. Sometimes LBJ had a few requests about what was served. "One day he told me, 'Jessie, I don't want anything heavy for lunch because if I get too full and comfortable I'll go to sleep and won't get any work done.'"

Supper was supposed to be served at 7, but, Jessie laughed, there were many evenings she had to keep the food on the stove until much later.

"If Mr. Johnson was meeting with people, it might be nine or eleven before he ate," she said. "You couldn't tell Mr. Johnson to eat now or else. I'd have to cook everything all over again. I'd make stews and hash out of the first batch for the staff. One night I cooked steaks three times before he and his guests finally got around to eating."

The fifth of six girls, Jessie lived on her parents' small farm near Fairfield until she was 10. The family moved into town then and her father took a job as a church custodian while her mother worked as a maid and cook for a Fairfield banker.

"My mother was a good cook," Jessie said after lunch as she and her assistant, Alice Reece, sat at one of the dozen or so tables in the bank's second-floor dining room. "I remember going with her when I was 11 or 12 to help her in the kitchen. Sometimes I baby-sat for the family, too, did washing, ironing, cooking and cleaning. I got \$10 a week."

After graduating from high school in 1948 as salutatorian of her class, Jessie spent a year at Prairie View A&M as an English major. She planned to become a teacher.

"Oh, I thought I knew everything then," she said with a giggle. "Even as short as I am, I played guard on the girls' basketball team, but my mother was the old-fashioned type. She didn't believe women should appear in public in shorts, so she wouldn't give permission for me to travel with the team."

So Jessie got mad, quit school, married Love Fantroy and had three babies in three years. She and Love, who was the first black deputy sheriff in Johnson County, divorced in 1979. While the children were growing up, she squeezed in Sunday school teaching, served on the PTA council, did her turn as Girl Scout and Camp Fire leaders and was secretary of the high school band booster's club.

One of Jessie's big regrets through the years, especially those she worked at the LBJ Ranch, is her failure to keep a diary. "I wish now I had," she sighed. "I had lots of time in the evenings when I worked for the Johnsons to write things down. Now, the names, the dates, I've forgotten so many of them."

The transition from First Family to First State Bank was a snap and Jessie's warm, easy-going personality quickly endeared her to bank officials and staff. Her hearty, delicious lunches

The highlight of Jessie's career as a cook came two years ago when honorary bank director Hugh Menefee invited her to spend Christmas with his family in Hawaii. In return for the two weeks in Hawaii, all Jessie had to do was fix Christmas dinner.

"Mr. Menefee was hungry for some good ol' Texas food," Jessie said. "He was sick too death of pineapple and told me to load my luggage with chili powder." Christmas dinner was barbecue, baked beans, cold slaw and cobbler.

Country cornbread

- 2 cups cornmeal
- ¾ cup flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup canned milk
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine all dry ingredients together. Mix in milk. Add egg last. Cook in 450 degree oven for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

East Texas savory barbecue sauce

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon salad oil
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup grated onion
- ½ cup vinegar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup catsup
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon liquid hickory smoke

Mix all ingredients in 2-quart sauce pan. Bring to boil for 15 to 20 minutes.

Louisiana barbecued spareribs

- 3 pounds spareribs
- 2 tablespoons fat
- 1 medium onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup catsup
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ tablespoon ground mustard
- 1 cup water

Brown onions and celery in fat in skillet or pan. Add remaining ingredients except ribs; bring to boil and pour over spareribs, which have been browned on all sides and steamed for 30 minutes in dutch oven or large skillet. Put sauce-covered ribs in an open baking pan and place on upper shelf in oven. Cook at 350 degrees until fork tender.

Meat and potato eaters delight

- 1 pound ground chuck
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup

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The transition from First Family to First State Bank was a snap and Jessie's warm, easy-going personality quickly endeared her to bank officials and staff. Her hearty, delicious lunches didn't hurt things either. Neither did the tea cakes she bakes in the morning and are served all day to bank customers.

First State Bank is rather unusual anyway. It's the bank that's gained fame as one of the few in the country with a landing strip out the back door. The landing strip is grass outlined with car tires painted white. That's why it's called the Cow Pasture Bank or the Fly-In Bank. It's not a small bank either, not with deposits of more than \$66 million and 14,000 checking accounts.

Employees get 30 minutes for lunch, and since there are no restaurants nearby, the bank has had a cook and a kitchen since 1964. Before that employees fixed their own meals in a small kitchen.

When Jessie came to the bank, the kitchen was a tiny thing about the size of a closet. The dining area consisted of two to four small tables. When the credit department expanded, the kitchen moved into slightly larger quarters for three years. Part of that early kitchen is now the coffee bar where bank customers enjoy free coffee and soft drinks while nibbling on Jessie's tea cakes.

Last year the bank added a large, fully equipped kitchen and dining room for 50 people over the new drive-in bank. Jessie and her pots and pans moved in just before Christmas and now she and Alice feed 80 to 100 people every day in three 30-minute shifts. Huge picture windows look down on the landing strip, its orange windsock and beyond to a field of wildflowers that stretches for miles and miles to the horizon. Employees pay about \$15 a month to eat on the premises while the bank subsidizes the rest of the lunch bill.

"Mother" Fantroy watches over her bank family like they were her children. She slaps a hand reaching for the Fritos in the buffet line with the warning, "You don't need those" to a man she knows is trying to lose weight. She keeps special foods on hand for pregnant women like Carolyn Cain, who has cravings for lemons and tomatoes. If colds and flu are going around, she fixes stews and soups and things that aren't very spicy.

Jessie loves her new setup. "I thought I'd be lonely away from everybody," she offered, "but the customers followed me right on up here. When I was in that other kitchen, I cut me a peephole in the wall so I could talk to people."

2/3 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

1 teaspoon dry mustard

1 tablespoon salad oil

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1/4 cup grated onion

1/4 cup vinegar

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 cup catsup

2 cups water

1 teaspoon liquid hickory smoke

Mix all ingredients in 2-quart sauce pan.

Bring to boil for 15 to 20 minutes.

Louisiana barbecued spareribs

3 pounds spareribs

2 tablespoons fat

1 medium onion

1/2 cup chopped celery

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 cup catsup

3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons vinegar

1/4 cup lemon juice

1/2 tablespoon ground mustard

1 cup water

Brown onions and celery in fat in skillet or pan. Add remaining ingredients except ribs; bring to boil and pour over spareribs, which have been browned on all sides and steamed for 30 minutes in dutch oven or large skillet. Put sauce-covered ribs in an open baking pan and place on upper shelf in oven. Cook at 350 degrees until fork tender.

Meat and potato eaters delight

1 pound ground chuck

1/2 cup chopped onion

1 can cream of mushroom soup

6 medium potatoes, sliced 1/4-inch thick

1 cup grated American cheese

Brown ground chuck with onion, salt and pepper to taste. Add mushroom soup to meat and onion mixture. Coat baking dish with non-stick spray. Put a layer of potatoes on bottom, then meat, soup and onion. Cover with foil and put in 375 degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Take foil off and spread grated cheese on top. Leave in hot oven for 5 to 10 minutes more to melt cheese. Serves 6 to 8.

Jessie's chewys

1 pound light brown sugar

2 tablespoons sugar

2 sticks butter or margarine

4 large eggs

1 teaspoon butter flavoring

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups and 2 tablespoons flour

1 cup pecans

Mix sugars and butter together by hand.

Mix in eggs and flavorings. Add flour. Sprinkle pecans over top. Bake in 18- by 24-inch pan at 325 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes.

East Texas candied yams

2 pounds fresh sweet potatoes or yams

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 stick margarine

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1/4 cup corn syrup

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Cut sweet potatoes in quarters and boil in water with lemon juice for 20 to 30 minutes, until tender. Pour water off and put potatoes in 2-quart casserole. Add other ingredients and bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until done.

Old-fashioned okra gumbo

2 cups okra

1/4 cup onions, chopped

1/4 cup butter

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

No. 2 can tomatoes

Saute okra and onions in melted butter until onion is clear. Add salt, pepper and tomatoes. Simmer 30 minutes or until all vegetables are fork-tender but not musky.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 1966.

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

Henry Haller, executive chef at the Sheraton-East Hotel in New York City, will become White House chef on February 1.

Mr. Haller who was born and educated in Switzerland has been a naturalized citizen of the United States since 1957.

He is 43 years old, married, and has four children: two sons, Robert Henry, 9 years old; and Richard Eugene, 6; and two daughters - Susan Carole, 5 years old, and Nancy Rose, 4.

Mr. Haller will reside in chef's quarters at the White House until his family moves to Washington later in the spring.

Educated and trained in international cuisine, Mr. Haller is President of Helvetia Association of New York, the largest Swiss chef's society in the United States. He has also been vice-president of Society Culinare Philanthropique of New York City, and is a member of Vatel Club, Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs of New York, and Les Amis d'Escoffier of New York City --all culinary organizations.

Mr. Haller holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Kollegium (College) Karl Borrowmaus in Altdorf, Switzerland, which he attended from January, 1937 until March, 1939

He served his apprenticeship in hotels in Switzerland, and was trained in continental cuisine, holding various positions as sauce chef and assistant chef.

In 1949 he became night chef at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Montreal, Canada. In 1952 he came to the United States and has served in various positions as chef.

In 1958, he became chef de cuisine (the top position in this field) for Hampshire House in New York, and in 1962 he took this same position with the Sheraton-East where he has been for the past four years.

Harold Bock, manager, of the Sheraton-East, said:
"I regard Mr. Haller as possibly the finest chef in New York City and one of the finest in the country. He is loyal, hardworking, serious. He has been with the Sheraton East for four years and we have found him to be resourceful, and economical in a sensible way."

In joining the White House staff, Mr. Haller will be working with the food coordinator, Mrs. Mary Kaltman, who said: "I'm perfectly delighted that Mr. Haller was willing to come at a considerable financial sacrifice. His credentials are impeccable and his experience as an administrator in a modern kitchen will be of great benefit but most of all we are delighted he has had wide experience in the preparation of both continental and American dishes."

Mr. Haller will supervise the new Central Storage Service which has been established in the White House by Mrs. Kaltman.

This service works as a single unit in purchasing and supplying the various White House kitchens and will mean a sizeable economic saving because of planned buying. It will eliminate daily trips to pick up supplies, and result in a saving of man-hour waste.

Dear

Walter Jetton was the name of the chef who wrote the *LBJ Barbecue Cookbook*. While it is no longer in print, copies of the cookbook are available through www.alibris.com and www.abebooks.com or from many used book dealers.

For information about Mr. Jetton and a link to a recipe of his, you can go to <http://bbq.about.com/library/weekly/aa051300.htm> and find the information.

The Library has copies of a menu and photographs from a barbecue at the LBJ Ranch, as well as correspondence and *Washington Post* articles relating to Mr. Jetton, including a few recipes from the book. If you are interested in receiving copies of this information, please call or email the Library with your mailing address and a credit card number and expiration date. We can make photocopies and send them to you for twenty-five cents per page plus shipping. There are approximately 15-20 pages.

If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact me or an archivist.

Sincerely,

Nicole Hartmann Hadad
Archives Intern
Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
nicole.hadad@nara.gov